Minutes — University Executive Board

Date: 26 March 2019

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL) (in the Chair),
Professor John Derrick (JD), Mrs H J Dingle (HJD),
Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor M J Hounslow (MJH),
Professor Jackie Marsh, Professor D Petley (DP),
Professor Dame Pamela J Shaw (PJS), Mr R Sykes (RS),
Professor G Valentine (GV), Professor Craig Watkins (CW)

In attendance: Mrs A Horn (AH) (item 1), Mr R Gower (RG) (item 2), Dr R Birch (RHB) (item 5).

Apologies: Mr A Dodman (AD), Professor W Morgan (WM), Dr T Strike (TS)

Minute Secretary: Mr M J Borland (MJB)

Welcome and introductions

Professor Jackie Marsh attended the meeting in Professor Wyn Morgan's absence and was welcomed to her first UEB meeting in this capacity.

1. Plan S

(Anne Horn in attendance for this item)

1.1 UEB considered a paper on open access publishing, including the implementation headlines for Plan S, the potential impacts for researchers and the University, and the timelines for UKRI and for the Wellcome Trust. Attention was drawn to the debate taking place amongst learned societies and academies. Revised guidance from cOAlition S was anticipated in May 2019. Research intensive institutions could expect to see payments increase if current publishing practices were to continue.

The following comments were made during discussion:
- If there were to be a cap for publication fees there would be a concern publishers would set fees at the highest possible level.
- There were implications for professional societies as the publishing model moved away from them.
- There was a potential reputational risk for those institutions amongst the first to implement open access.
- There was a risk to the UK research base if there was not access to certain journals, e.g. *Science* and *Nature*.
- Part of being a PhD student involved publishing articles but the anticipated costs to the institution of publishing could limit these opportunities.
- It was possible that different versions of open access would be tried before a final model emerged.

UEB agreed:

(a) To take a 'wait and see' approach.

(b) The seven recommended actions set out in the paper, to respond to Plan S and for University of Sheffield researchers to be eligible for UKRI and European Science grants, would be taken forward.

(c) The Vice-President Research & Innovation would work with Faculty Directors of Research & Innovation to socialise open access requirements.

2. Faculty Research Support: PGR

(Rob Gower in attendance for this item)

2.1 UEB considered a paper containing the second phase proposals for Faculty-based research support. This was in the context of learning from the first phase and the need to ensure delivery of Faculty-based Graduate Schools in a 'hub and spoke' model as agreed by Senate. Attention was drawn to the benefit of setting out minimum expectations and that the timescale could vary by Faculty.

2.2 During discussion the following points were made
- The first phase had focused on ensuring academics in the University had access to research support.
- If posts were to require activity to be undertaken in relation to a department, a Faculty or the Deputy Vice-President (PGR) this could strengthen the case for a matrix management approach.
- There would be a need to ensure that variation between the same posts in different Faculties did not arise over time.

3. Institutional Support for University Research Institutes

3.1 UEB considered a paper proposing a support package for the first four University Research Institutes (URIs), which will be launched in April 2019. It was highlighted that URIs would enable the University to focus on its key research strengths and feedback received from HoDs was supportive. The proposal, which built on an initial small amount of central support for URIs, now included two dedicated academic positions for each URI: a very high calibre early career researcher and a mid-career member of staff.

3.2 UEB agreed:

(a) The proposed scheme of central support for the initial four URIs.

(b) That URIs would be overseen by the Vice-President for Research.

3.3 **Actions:**

(a) Further thought be given to the recruitment process to ensure that appointments were of the appropriate calibre.

(b) That financial information on the PBA drivers be provided.

4. SLP and Data Futures update

4.1 UEB received and noted the update. Attention was drawn to three issues: readiness and technical concerns related to SLP; feedback from the Pulse survey, which whilst not unexpected was challenging; and HESA no longer planned to implement Data Futures in 2019/20 as originally planned. The University would therefore retain CIS as the core student information system in the 2019/20 academic year for operational and reporting purposes and the SLP major student launch would be postponed until

2020/21. The changes did not have an impact on the budget or on the timescales for the project.

4.2   Comments made in discussion included:

- The postponement of Data Futures would enable more testing, familiarisation, and training on the University's information system, which was planned to be available from September 2019.
- A postponement offered the benefit of enabling greater academic engagement, and some smaller products could be released.
- The communications to confirm the decision should include some of the negative aspects of the postponement.

4.3   **Action:** An update on the Strategic Change Office (SCO) be brought to UEB by the end of June, which would include updates on SLP; Programme Level Approach (PLA) and other aspects of SCO activity.

5.   Closed Minute

6.   Round Table

(a)   Interim arrangements: KL updated UEB on the interim arrangements regarding the responsibilities of the Chief Operational Officer.

(b)   Sir John Kingman: KL reported that the Chair of UKRI had visited the University.
Action: Follow up on potential funding opportunities.

(c)   Academic Workload Task and Finish Group: CW reported as the Chair of the Group that a programme of work had been agreed and the Group would report to UEB.

(d)   UEB ways of working: KL reported that following the UEB/HoDs meeting a proposal would be brought to UEB shortly.

(e)   PLA: JM reported that a paper regarding PLA timings would be brought to UEB.

(f)   Skills and employability: JM reported on forthcoming work in relation to skills and employability.